

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS) was designated in 1982 as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to coordinate the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process in the urbanized area surrounding Bangor. The BACTS metropolitan planning area consists of 11 municipalities (3 cities, 7 towns and 1 Indian Nation), which make up the 2010 Census designated Greater Bangor urbanized area (UZA). These municipalities include Bangor, Brewer, Veazie, Penobscot Indian Island and portions of Hampden, Orono, Old Town, Milford, Bradley, Orrington and Hermon. The 2010 Census indicates that 61,210 people live in the BACTS urbanized area, making it the third largest urban center in the state of Maine. The geographic boundaries of the MPO are shown in Figure 1.

The Policy Committee governs BACTS. This committee is comprised of sixteen municipal officials, a representative from Community Connector, and a Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT) representative. There are also four non-voting members, representing the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) transportation subcommittee, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Policy Committee meets regularly to establish transportation priorities and to allocate specific categories of federal funds to meet the area's transportation needs. The Policy Committee can, and does, authorize ad hoc advisory committees as needed to provide advice.

In order to receive Federal funding for transportation projects in the urbanized area, BACTS is required to produce a broad-based, long-range, multimodal transportation plan addressing the needs of its constituency. To meet this mandate, BACTS prepares and presents an updated Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) every five years. This plan represents several iterations of input and feedback from the primary users -- the traveling public within the urbanized area, considered by the Policy Committee to determine the present and future transportation needs of the region.

This plan is intended to serve as a guide for coordinated decision-making and long-term planning and investment in transportation projects at the municipal, regional, and state levels. BACTS has considered all locally available modes of transportation in compiling this plan, including the existing and future highway system, railroads, air travel, marine transport, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and methods for improving intermodal connections for passengers and freight. The plan also considers less quantifiable aspects of transportation planning, such as the potential for future business development and tourism in the Bangor region and quality-of-life concerns for area residents. Elements of the plan include an inventory of the current BACTS transportation system, a listing of current and future problems that will need to be addressed, as well as recommendations to alleviate or eliminate these problems in order to achieve the stated goals and objectives by the year 2038.

1.2 Overview of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The BACTS MTP for the next two decades focuses on maintaining existing infrastructure, increasing intermodal connectivity and making the Bangor region a more attractive and convenient place to live, work, shop, and play. Good transportation planning does not occur in a vacuum; many of the long-range goals focus on coordinating local and regional transportation initiatives with land planning, access management, and environmental protection, to permit economic growth without sacrificing the high quality of life, which residents and visitors to the Bangor area currently enjoy.

Chapter 2 describes the existing demographics in the metropolitan area with an analysis of socioeconomic conditions. Chapter 3 presents the BACTS mission statement, Federal planning factors, State policy objectives, Regional goals and BACTS priorities. Chapters 4 through 9 address the existing conditions and trends, deficiencies, and recommendations for individual modes. These chapters describe the BACTS vision for the year 2038 and what it will take to get there. Chapters 10 and 11 focus on economic development and tourism; climate change, livability, and sustainability; all interwoven issues important to the region and required by FHWA. Chapter 12 discusses the legislative requirement and timeframe to integrate performance measures in the planning and decision-making process. Chapter 13 outlines financial conditions including issues and constraints. Chapter 14 provides a compilation of all recommendations from each chapter.

Appendix A contains a schedule of public involvement for this Long Range Plan and the compilation of public comments on the plan, with a specific response to each, if warranted. Appendix B contains classifications of all BACTS arterials and collectors, traffic volumes, and an historic list of BACTS Transportation Improvement Projects. Appendix C is acronyms used in transportation planning while Appendix D contains definitions used in transportation planning.

1.3 Legislative Mandates

All transportation initiatives undertaken by BACTS must adhere to standards specified in existing federal and state legislation. In addition to the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) investment goals listed in Chapter 3, the BACTS planning process is subject to the prescriptions of the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act (MSTPA), the Clean Air Act Amendment (CAA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

1.4 Public Participation Process

The FAST Act and MSTPA require each MPO to develop a public involvement process for the development and implementation of its transportation planning initiatives. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires a means of ensuring that transportation projects are not selected on the basis of discriminatory practices. Informed public review and feedback help to ensure that the proposed transportation alternatives truly meet the needs of the local community. It is particularly critical to get the opinions of users whose concerns may otherwise be overlooked in the transportation planning process, including low-income residents and workers, disabled individuals, the elderly, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

In order to maximize public input to the MTP, BACTS staff members solicit public feedback in structured and well-publicized meetings and focus groups, as well as through informal face-to-face visits, written commentary, the BACTS website, e-mail, and telephone conversations. An extensive computerized database is used to continually expand the contact list of interested and affected parties and special interest groups for working advisory committees and informational mailings. A schedule of public involvement for this Metropolitan Transportation Plan is included in Appendix A. A copy of the BACTS public participation document, detailing methods and timelines for soliciting public participation for transportation planning and decision-making may be found on the BACTS website at: www.bactsmmpo.org. This Public Participation Plan was last reviewed and updated in 2015.